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ABSTRACT

The development of the City University of New York's writing assessment test is discussed in this paper. Its relationship to the total freshman skills assessment program, which also involves the assessment of minimal competencies in mathematics and reading, is related. The discussion of the test includes descriptions of the test development committee's work, its decisions to use a writing sample graded holistically, the methods of training reader/evaluators, and the actual reading procedures that--due to budget restrictions--have remained in individual schools rather than being conducted centrally. Comments from the evaluator of the writing project are cited and positive aspects of the program are noted. The appendixes include a press release showing students' scores in the fall of 1978 and improved scores of those who were retested in the spring of 1979, a copy of the student information bulletin describing the test, and a pamphlet describing the writing skills assessment test that contains sample student essays with evaluators' comments. (MKM)

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The CUNY Writing Assessment Test: 1976-1980

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Because the CUNY Writing Assessment Test is one-third of the Freshman Skills Assessment Program, a discussion of the test should begin with the history of the program. Before we talk about history, though, I want to tell you what I think the program has accomplished. The most significant accomplishment of the Freshman Skills Assessment Program is that there is a uniform agreement on standards of minimal competence in reading, writing, and mathematics in the seventeen undergraduate colleges in City University. While colleges are free to set higher standards for competence, CUNY has, for the first time, an agreed-upon "floor" for these standards. Communication of standards among colleges and, particularly, articulation between the community and senior colleges is now possible. That these standards have been as widely accepted as they appear to be is due, primarily, to the fact that CUNY basic skills faculty were involved in the selection or creation of the tests and the policies and implementation of the testing program. This is noteworthy because it is unlike the pattern of test development and testing programs often mandated by and imposed by administrations on secondary and postsecondary school systems elsewhere.

The perception of faculty at many colleges is that the FSAP has focused attention on remediation and increased support of the local administration for the remedial effort;

this has not, however, been a uniform administrative response. Mandating competence testing is easy; mandating adequate programs and structures which will allow students a fair chance of developing those competencies is not. This basic problem plagues CUNY's testing program as it plagues similar efforts at mandating minimal competencies in other school systems. The Freshman Skills Assessment Program was created in response to the Board of Higher Education resolution of April 5, 1976:

> "RESOLVED, That students moving to the upper divisions of a four-year college either from the lower divisions of the college or from a community college within the University system or outside of it must provide evidence, in accordance with a standard to be determined by the Chancellor, that they have attained a level of proficiency in basic learning skills necessary to cope successfully with advanced work in the academic disciplines.
>
> EXPLANATION: Foregoing resolutions are intended to maximize the instructional resources of the University. With the inception of the Open Admissions Program, the University and its faculty

have liberalized the grading process so as to maximize opportunities for students. In the process, the grading system has been abused to the extent that very little incentive has been provided the student where he or she is doing less than average work. The intent of these resolutions is to have students' transcripts accurately reflect their performance and to maximize the available instructional resources."

In the Fall, 1976, the Chancellor's Committee on Movement from the Lower to Upper Division was created to identify the basic skills areas and to make recommendations for the implementation of this resolution. Its report, issued in March, 1977 recommended testing in reading, writing, and mathematics and the nature of the tests to be used. This report was included in "Freshman Skills Assessment: A Proposal," published by the Office of Academic Affairs in August, 1977. The latter report mandated testing all incoming freshmen to identify skills deficiencies and the placing these students in remedial courses to help them overcome these deficiencies prior to the end of their sophomore year.

In the Fall, 1977, the Chancellor created a Policy Advisory Board and Task Forces on Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. The charge of the three task forces was to select

or develop tests which would be given to all Fall, 1978 freshmen. The Policy Advisory Board would review the recommendations of the task forces and consider policies to be recommended to the Chancellor. Under these time constraints, the charge was fulfilled, and all incoming freshmen were tested.

A ten-member Task Force on Writing was appointed in October and November, 1977. The members were:

Professor Kenneth Bruffee (Brooklyn College)
Professor Susan Cole (New York City Community College)
Professor A. J. Franklin (City College)
Professor Barbara Gonzales (Borough of Manhattan C.C.)
Professor Linda Kunz (Hunter College)
Professor Patricia Licklider (John Jay College)
Professor Charles Veley (Medgar Evèrs College)
Professor Harvey Wiener (LaGuardia C.C.)
Myself (Baruch College)
Professor Robert Lyons (Queens College) Chairman

(The present membership differs slightly; Professor Kenneth Bruffe is Chairman; Professors Cole, Franklin, and Veley resigned and were replaced by Professors Carol Edmead (Medgar Evers) and Richard Bedrosian (New York City Community College).

The Task Force on Writing made recommendations to the University Dean in charge of Skills Assessment and the Policy Advisory Board. The Dean reported to the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs who reported, finally, to the Chancellor. Final decisions on these as on all other matters are made by the Chancellor.

To quote the Chairman, Bob Lyons, The Task Force on Writing was aware from the first meeting in December of 1977 that we had two major problems: time and money. Of all that has been in flux since the inception of the Freshman Skills Assessment Program, those problems have remained constant. We were told that there was no budget and that the colleges would have to shoulder the burden of the testing program. Individual members of the Task Force had to pay their own expenses and donated vast sums of time as well as some money to the program. During that first year we met, according to my calendar, at least twenty-two times; each meeting lasted from two to three hours. None of us, with the exception of the Chariman, had released time -- and his released time in no way compensated for his incredible efforts and accomplishments.

From the beginning on, we were unanimously agreed that the Writing Assessment Test should consist entirely of a

writing sample. We had two strong beliefs on which this decision was based:

1) A piece of student writing indicates writing ability more accurately than a machine-scored standardized test.
2) The use of a writing sample signals both CUNY English teachers and English teachers in the secondary schools that the business of writing classes is writing.

Some "teaching to the test" is inevitable, and we were determined that we would construct a test that would be desirable to teach to. Despite the problem that no single measurement can tap the entire domain to be tested, and we could not possibly devise a test which would tap the domain of every conceivable kind of writing which our students could--or should--engage in, we chose a format which we believed would be the one students would be most likely to engage in during their college careers. Students are asked to take a position on a subject and to support that position from their own experiences or reading. You have in front of you a copy of the booklet of annotated essays which was developed by the Task Force to explain the CUNY Writing Assessment Test. Most of you are probably familiar with the test--at times during the semester, I'm sure, far more familiar than you care to be.

The Task Force recommended unanimously that student essays be graded holistically and centrally. Both of these recommendations--the use of a writing sample and the use of centralized reading--reaffirmed recommendations made previously by the Chancellor's Committee on Movement from the Lower to Upper Division.

Because there was no budget for testing the first year, it was not possible to conduct centralized readings. Because of the very low yearly budget since then, it is still not possible. The Task Force on Writing, reluctantly, proposed decentralized readings at the campuses, with a method of reader training to be done centrally and then reintroduced by the Chief Readers at the individual campuses. In effect, for the same reasons, this procedure has been adopted each subsequent year. Because of the decentralized nature of the readings, the Task Force felt the necessity of developing the grading scale and general guidelines which appear in the booklet of annotated essays. The descriptions of the various levels of writing, indicated by the one-to-six scale, were developed, borrowing heavily from earlier work done by Dean Mina Shaugnessy.

The Task Force was concerned about achieving reliable results despite the decentralization of the readings, and

advance and spent at least one day at the Central Office meeting with representatives of the colleges and the Central Office staff involved in developing and/or implementing the tests. The overall response of the consultants was positive. All three found the tests reasonable and fair measures of the basic skills of CUNY students; all said that these tests fulfilled the original mandate of the Board. In addition, all three commented on the high level of commitment, knowledge, and concern of the CUNY faculty involved in the testing program.

Professor Lee Odell was the writing consultant. Professor Odell, as most of you know, teaches English at the State University of New York at Albany, has authored over twenty articles on writing programs, received numerous grants, lectures and consults widely, and is co-editor of two significant books on the evaluation of writing: Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging; and Research on Composing: Points of Departure.

Professor Odell's task was to examine the Writing Skills Assessment Test and the procedures used in the testing program. He concluded that the test represents "a reasonable response to the problem of assessing students' writing ability." The Task Force on Writing, he emphasizes, has recommended sound procedures for the evaluation of writing. These include;

so each of the two years of testing has culminated in a CUNY Audit in which each college must submit early in June a random sample of essays to Central Office. Half of these submissions from each college are again chosen at random (a total of seventeen hundred essays) and read centrally under the direction of the Task Force by Chief Readers and their designees. In the first audit, there was a problem of several colleges not submitting a true random sample. In the second, this process was carefully monitored. The results of the first audit, not of great value, indicated that there was a rate of agreement on pass-fail between colleges and central audit of a little better than eighty per cent. The second audit indicated a rate of agreement of eighty-five per cent...a respectable rate of agreement.

After a problematical start, in the first year, a system of pilot-testing of topics was begun and has been carried out each year. There is always concern about topics on such tests, and you will hear more in later sessions today about some of the research that we have undertaken in order to improve topic selection and wording of the writing assignment.

In September, 1979 three consultants were brought in to review various aspects of the Freshman Skills Assessment Program. Each consultant was sent all relevant material in

(1) the use of "range finders', essays that clearly illustrate to readers the different levels of performance and which are prerequisites to inter-rater reliability; (2) training sessions for chief readers; and (3) essay readings by at least two trained readers. However, creating the test and grading procedures only begins what must evolve into an ongoing process of monitoring those procedures, evaluating essay topics, and gathering and studying reader reliability data. These activities must be continued to insure test validity.

In order to implement his proposals, Odell insists that readers be compensated for their work. (Otherwise we end up rewarding inconsistent readers by excusing them from reading.) He recommends that Writing Task Force members be given released time to pursue the activities he has outlined: monitoring test results; creating, piloting, and testing topics; and analyzing student essays to evaluate the rubric of the writing assignments. You will hear more later in the day about the ways in which we are implementing Odell's suggestions for research.

Of all three tests developed or chosen for the Freshman Skills Assessment Program, the Writing Assessment Test has generated the most support and the most agreement that it has had a positive effect on writing programs. While this

has not been a universal reaction--nothing in CUNY ever is--it has been a repeated reaction at the campuses we have visited, at meetings of Chief Academic Officers, in formal and informal discussions with faculty members.

As a former member of the Writing Task Force, I appreciate the irony in this. We sat, three years ago, fighting unseen adversaries who advocated--still--objective tests in writing. We wrote long justifications for our position that the only way to evaluate student writing was through examining student writing. We constantly dealt with the problem of "objectivity" and"subjectivity"--only to find, three years later, that the pendulum has moved nationally to the use of writing tests and holistic grading; the recent CCCC Conference in Washington is a case in point.

I do not mean to suggest that ours is a perfect test. The writing test, because it is a homegrown test, needs constant evaluation and research. I do not mean to minimize problems of readings at the campuses. It is an effort of labor and commitment on the part of everyone concerned in its administration. I do believe that it has the potential for encouraging and improving the teaching in our basic skills courses and, hopefully, for encouraging faculty in other disciplines to make written assignments and, after, to evaluate these assignments. For the first time, there is a

dialogue across campuses in areas where there was little dialogue--and there is a commitment to some agreed-upon standards. For the first time, community college students and faculty have concrete examples of what are considered minimal standards of writing competence in the senior colleges. This, in itself is a tremendous step forward.

Even the burdens and the problems of decentralized readings have had one beneficial aspect. Throughout English Departments in CUNY faculty members are exchanging views on writing competence and are training themselves and each other to judge competence in ways that may not be identical but in ways that allow us to talk to each other. Students believe and have always believed that if you hand in the same paper to two English teachers, one will give it an "A" and the other an "F". We have proved through the Writing Assessment Test that this is not so. Our audit reveals that from one year to the next we are coming closer to achieving consensus in our judgments of writing competence. I think, I hope, that this will spill over into the judgments which we make when we grade student papers in our writing classes. When this happens, our students will feel less like they are traversing quicksand as they move from one English class to the next. If English teachers in seventeen urban college campuses can move toward consensus in evaluating student writing it is an achievement, and it is one worth working for.

BASIC SKILLS TEST SCORES ANALYZED

Handout - NYSEC 10/18/80

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FOR RELEASE A.M.'s
THURSDAY, JUNE 12

New Data from City University

CUNY STUDENTS RANK HIGH IN NATIONAL READING TEST; THREE IN FOUR COMPLETING SOPHOMORE YEAR PASS ALL BASIC SKILLS TESTS; UNDER-PREPARED STUDENTS GAIN FROM REMEDIATION

New York, June 12 -- Challenging some commonly-held beliefs that remedial education is ineffective in correcting basic academic skills deficiencies among underprepared adults, data from the nation's largest systematic college-level program of basic skills testing and remedial instruction suggest that many students who fail such tests upon entry will be able to pass them following adequate remedial instruction, and that these gains are most dramatic among the most disadvantaged students.

The data, comprising the results of tests in reading, writing and mathematics administered to the entire Fall 1978 freshman class of the City University of New York (CUNY), upon entry and through the Spring of 1979, also revealed that four in five regular students entering the University's nine four-year colleges passed the reading comprehension test -- well above the national average.

In releasing the data here today at CUNY's East 80th Street headquarters, University Chancellor Robert J. Kibbee said that "the results suggest several important things: that CUNY's entering students are better grounded

academically than many people may have supposed; that basic skills remediation for adults, properly done, works; and that its benefits can be most dramatic for those who need it most. But what they also illustrate, at the same time, is the tremendous responsibility our school system has to see that basic skills are mastered when they should be -- well in advance of college."

Three in Four Students Completing Second Year Found to Meet Basic Skills Requirements

The testing program upon which these and other findings are derived was developed in response to a 1976 action by the Board of Higher Education, the University's governing body, requiring all students entering the University in the Fall of 1978 and later to establish their competence in basic skills before moving from the sophomore to the junior year (that is, having completed 61 college credits).

In practice, for the first group affected by this new requirement -- i.e. students who entered in the Fall of 1978 and have just completed 61 credits and now wish to proceed to the junior year -- the University is recommending that those who have passed two of the three tests by the 61st credit be granted an extension on the third until completion of the 78th credit. (The total number of credits required for the baccalaureate degree is 128.)

Dr. Kibbee said that more than three-fourths of this group -- 1250 out of a total of 1600 students -- have passed all three of the skills tests, and will

(more)

be admitted to their junior year. Some of the remainder may be given permission to move on to the junior year, but only on a conditional basis, and only after review by the academic authorities of their college.

Reading Test Results Show that CUNY Students Score Well Compared to National Average

The entry-level test results (Table 1) show that of 10,000 students regularly admitted to the senior colleges in the Fall of 1978, four-fifths (81 percent) passed the reading comprehension test, and approximately two-thirds passed the writing test (65 percent) and the mathematics test (64 percent). The reading test was the widely-used standardized California Achievement Test in Reading, scored to an 11th to 12th grade reading level, which permits national comparison. Results show that CUNY's senior college entrants ranked well above the 50 percent pass rate, which by definition corresponds to the national average. The other two tests were developed by special City University faculty task forces, and are not statistically comparable with tests elsewhere. Nationally recognized experts in mathematics and writing from outside the university evaluated the tests and found them fair and reasonable measures of students' basic skills.

Of the 17,200 students regularly admitted to community colleges in the Fall of 1978, approximately one-half (52 percent) passed the reading comprehension test -- on a par with the national average. Two-fifths (40 percent) passed the writing test, and one-fourth (25 percent), the mathematics test.

For the community colleges, a student who is "regularly admitted" is one who possesses a high school diploma and is not a beneficiary of College Discovery, a special program providing counseling and support services for economically

disadvantaged students. For the senior colleges, "regularly admitted" means that in addition to possession of a high school diploma, the student has achieved a high school grade point average of at least 80 percent or graduated in the top one-third of his or her graduating class. It further means that the student is not a beneficiary of SEEK, another special program which provides an opportunity for admission to the senior colleges for economically disadvantaged students who do not meet the minimum grade point average or class standing requirements.

Retests Following Remediation Show Significant Progress in All Areas

The retest results, which permit one of the broadest-based examinations of the impact of remedial programs ever available, are based on the experiences of 6,000 students who were admitted to community and senior colleges in the Fall of 1978 and were still enrolled two years later. The tests covered include those conducted at entry, and all subsequent retests through the Spring of 1979. (They do not include retests conducted between the Fall of 1979 and the present.)

Among those Fall 1978 freshmen who failed one or more of the three tests upon entry and who were still enrolled in the University by the Spring of 1980, up to one-half passed upon the first or a subsequent retest (Table 3). Thus, among students regularly admitted to senior colleges, 92 percent had passed the reading test by mid-1979 (compared with 85 percent among that group upon entry); 75 percent had passed the writing test (compared with 68 percent upon entry); and 82 percent the mathematics test (compared with 71 percent upon entry). A

(more)

significant additional percentage of students had not yet taken a retest by the end of the period reviewed, reflecting the policy of many colleges and basic skills teachers to discourage students from taking the retest until they are thoroughly prepared for it.

Among the entrants to community colleges, percentage gains were somewhat smaller (57 percent to 65 percent for reading; 44 percent to 54 percent for writing; and 30 percent to 43 percent for mathematics). However, proportionately more students at the community colleges than at the senior colleges had not taken the retest by mid-1979, which accounts for most of the difference.

Gains Sharpest Among Most Disadvantaged Students

The increase in pass rates following remediation was especially dramatic among the most disadvantaged students. Among the SEEK students at senior colleges, for example, the percentage who passed upon retest (following failure upon entry) was greater -- in each of the three areas tested -- than the percentage of the class who passed upon entry. Thus, 60 percent of those who failed the reading test at entry and later took the retest passed it, compared with an upon-entry pass rate of 45 percent for the entire entering class (Table 4). In writing, 37 percent of those who failed at entry and later took the retest passed it, compared with 28 percent who passed upon entry. And in mathematics, 47 percent of those who failed at entry and later took the retest passed it, compared with just 19 percent upon entry.

(more)

The Chancellor pointed out that not all of the students' success upon retest should be attributed to remediation, in part because not every college had geared its remedial program directly to the tests during the first year (for example, success in the tests is not a uniformly-accepted requirement for exit from all remedial courses), and in part because several other factors -- including the role of the regular, non-remedial academic program -- contribute to improvement in a student's basic skills. Despite these qualifications, the Chancellor said that the data "provide a solid basis in fact to support the belief that in the setting of an open admissions policy, the combination of fair tests with solid remediation is a necessary, even if insufficient, means for maintaining both the academic standards of the university and the academic opportunity of the students." He went on to say that success in the basic skills tests constitutes "the mere floor, or minimally acceptable standard, of academic achievement" at the University, upon which the student seeking a college degree "must then build the traditional edifice of accomplishment in the required number of degree-credit, college-level courses."

CUNY, the nation's only metropolitan public university system and third largest university, consists of 17 undergraduate colleges (8 two-year and 9 four-year institutions), a Graduate School and affiliated medical school (Mount Sinai), governed by a 17-member Board of Trustees. It has an enrollment of 170,000 degree students, a faculty of 9,000, and a budget of $500 million a year.

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

REPORT ON FRESHMAN SKILLS ASSESSMENT TEST RESULTS FOR STUDENTS WHO ENTERED FALL 1978

The following tables present the freshman skills assessment test results for the students who entered City University as first time matriculated freshmen for the Fall 1978 semester. Table 1 presents the number of students registered as first time freshmen that semester in the senior colleges and the community colleges, and within each set, the number admitted under regular and special program status. The percentage of students in each category who passed each of the three examinations at the point of initial testing prior to registration for the Fall 1978 semester is also reported.

TABLE 1
Initial Test Results - Fall 1978 Freshmen

	Senior Colleges			Community Colleges		
	Regular Admits	SEEK Admits	Total	Regular Admits	College Discovery Admits	Total
Number of Fall 1978 Registered Freshmen:	9,990	3,166	13,156	17,198	1,946	19,144
% who passed upon entry in:						
Reading	81%	45%	72%	52%	35%	51%
Writing	65%	28%	56%	40%	26%	39%
Mathematics	64%	19%	49%	25%	13%	24%

Table 2 presents the percentage of Fall 1978 entering freshmen still enrolled as of the beginning of the Spring 1980 semester who have passed each of the three skills assessment examinations, either when tested upon entry in 1978 or on the basis of a retest administered by the end of the Spring 1979 semester. Data on retests administered at the colleges at the end of the Fall 1979 semester are not included in this analysis, since complete data from that retest cycle are not yet available centrally.

CUNY/OAA
Ribaudo 5/19/80

TABLE 2

Percentage Of Currently Enrolled Fall 1978 Freshmen Who Had Passed The Skills Assessment Tests By The End Of Spring 1979

	Senior Colleges			Community Colleges		
	Regular Admits	SEEK Admits	Total	Regular Admits	College Discovery Admits	Total
% still enrolled Spring 1980 who have passed to date in:						
Reading	92%	68%	86%	64%	45%	62%
Writing	75%	41%	67%	54%	41%	52%
Mathematics	82%	42%	73%	43%	27%	41%

Table 3 further breaks down the data presented on pass rates to date for those still in attendance Spring 1980 into the percentage who had passed the test when tested upon entry and the percentage who have passed on the basis of a retest administered to them by the close of the Spring 1979 semester. Again, students who might have passed on the basis of a retest administered at the end of the Fall 1979 semester or during the current Spring 1980 semester are not included in the percent passed to date. Therefore, these total passed to date percentages are actually lower bound estimates of the current status of the Fall 1978 entering cohort.

CUNY/OAA
Ribaudo 5/19/80

TABLE 3

FALL 1978 ENTERING FRESHMEN STILL ENROLLED SPRING 1980 WHO HAVE PASSED THE TESTS*

SENIOR COLLEGES:

	Regular Admits			SEEK Admits			TOTAL		
	Pass Initial Test	Pass Retest	Total Passed To Date	Pass Initial Test	Pass Retest	Total Passed To Date	Pass Initial Test	Pass Retest	Total Passed To Date
Reading	85%	7%	92%	46%	22%	68%	76%	10%	86%
Writing	68%	7%	75%	28%	13%	41%	59%	8%	67%
Mathematics	71%	11%	82%	23%	19%	42%	61%	12%	73%

COMMUNITY COLLEGES:

	Regular Admits			College Discovery Admits			TOTAL		
	Pass Initial Test	Pass Retest	Total Passed To Date	Pass Initial Test	Pass Retest	Total Passed To Date	Pass Initial Test	Pass Retest	Total Passed To Date
Reading	57%	8%	65%	36%	9%	45%	54%	8%	62%
Writing	44%	10%	54%	28%	13%	41%	42%	10%	52%
Mathematics	30%	13%	43%	17%	10%	27%	29%	12%	41%

* Students still enrolled Spring 1980 could have passed the test upon entry prior to the beginning of the Fall 1978 semester or could have passed on the basis of a retest taken either at the end of the Fall 1978 or Spring 1979 semester. Retests administered at the end of the Fall 1979 semester are not included in the data presented above.

TABLE 4

ANALYSIS OF PATTERNS OF RETESTING* - FALL 1978 ENTERING FRESHMEN STILL ENROLLED SPRING 1980

ALL PERCENTAGES ARE BASED ON THOSE STUDENTS WHO ENTERED AS FRESHMEN IN FALL 1978, FAILED THE TEST UPON ENTRY AND ARE STILL ENROLLED SPRING 1980

% who failed upon entry and:

SENIOR	Regular Admits			SEEK Admits			TOTAL		
	Took and failed retest	Took and passed retest	Have not taken retest	Took and failed retest	Took and passed retest	Have not taken retest	Took and failed retest	Took and passed retest	Have not taken retest
Reading	26%	41%	33%	25%	39%	36%	26%	40%	34%
Writing	27%	23%	50%	34%	21%	45%	30%	22%	48%
Mathematics	28%	34%	38%	26%	23%	51%	27%	29%	44%

COMMUNITY	Regular Admits			College Discovery Admits			TOTAL		
	Took and failed retest	Took and passed retest	Have not taken retest	Took and failed retest	Took and passed retest	Have not taken retest	Took and failed retest	Took and passed retest	Have not taken retest
Reading	12%	18%	70%	20%	15%	65%	13%	17%	70%
Writing	15%	18%	67%	25%	18%	57%	17%	18%	65%
Mathematics	9%	18%	73%	12%	12%	76%	9%	18%	73%

* Retesting information available for Fall 1978 and Spring 1979 retest cycles only

Table 4 presents an analysis of the patterns of retesting for the students who entered as freshmen in the Fall of 1978 and are still in attendance this current semester (Spring 1980). The data is broken down into the percentage of students who had failed the test upon entry and who have taken and failed a retest, the percentage who have taken and passed on the basis of a retest, and the percentage who have not as yet been retested. As in the previous tables, retest data is complete only up to and including the end of the Spring 1979 semester. This accounts for the high percentage of students who had yet to be retested, at least by that point in time. Since most of the colleges prevent students from taking the retest until the completion of the remedial sequence or strongly advise that the students wait until that time before attempting the retest, many students would not have attempted the retest until the end of the Fall 1979 semester, with some still not ready for retesting until the end of the present semester.

CUNY/OAA
Ribaudo 5/19/80

75% of City U sophs pass skills tests

By SHERYL McCARTHY
Education Editor

As part of a tightening of admissions and graduation standards, City University adopted in 1976 a requirement that all students must pass a series of basic skills tests before being allowed to begin their junior year.

First to be affected by the requirement were those students who entered school in fall 1978 and who are now completing their sophomore year. And yesterday, university officials disclosed that three fourths of the students eligible to enter their junior year have passed those exams.

University Chancellor Robert Kibbee called the results strong evidence that "in the setting of an open-admissions policy, the combination of fair tests with solid remediation is a necessary, even if insufficient, means for maintaining both the academic standards of the university and the academic opportunity of the students."

Harold Jacobs, chairman of the university's board of trustees, said the results vindicate the much-maligned Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK), a remedial program for educationally disadvantaged students that was the target of scathing criticism three years ago.

Chides public schools

However, while applauding the success of the university's remedial efforts, estimated to cost more than $70 million this year, Jacobs chided the city's public schools for not doing an adequate job of preparing students for college.

"If the public schools were doing their job, we would not have to go through this," Jacobs said. "We could spend that money on other new programs."

"I had my doubts a few years ago," Jacobs said of the remedial program. "Now it has certainly justified itself."

Despite the encouraging test results, the report also dramatizes the university's sizable drop-out rate. Of the 32,000 students who entered the university in the fall of 1978, only 18,000, or 56%, are still enrolled. Of that number, only 1,600 have completed the sophomore course requirements.

Daily News June 12, 1980

25% of Sophomores Fail Some City U. Skills Tests

By SAMUEL WEISS

Almost a quarter of the candidates for bachelor's degrees at the City University of New York now completing their sophomore year have not passed at least one of the basic skills tests in reading, writing and mathematics, university officials said yesterday. Students who fail any of the tests will have to apply for an extension to remain in college and to retake the tests.

The testing program, begun in the fall of 1978, is being used by the university for the first time to insure that all students moving from the sophomore to the junior year meet certain minimum standards in addition to completing the required 61 credits of course work.

These standards include being able to pass a reading test on the 12th-grade level and a mathematics test composed of arithmetic and algebra problems and to demonstrate proficiency in writing an essay.

While many colleges and universities use such tests for placement purposes, the City University is one of the few institutions in the country to make passage of the tests a graduation requirement. Educators said there was no way of comparing the test results with those in other universities because the tests themselves were not comparable.

Requirement Dates to 1976

The requirement was mandated in 1976 by the university's Board of Trustees, then known as the Board of Higher Education. This was at a time when many educators and laymen were questioning whether the university's academic standards had declined as a result of its open admissions policy, which guarantees a place in the university to New York City high school graduates. It was also at a time when members of the board were debating whether the university's size should be reduced because of the city's fiscal difficulties.

According to the data released yesterday, 1,250 of the 1,600 students finishing 61 credits this semester will be able to move into their junior year on an unconditional basis after having passed all three tests either as freshmen or after taking a retest following remedial course work.

Eight hundred of 1,000 sophomores at the senior college level passed the test, as did 450 of 600 potential community college students seeking to transfer to senior colleges, such as City and Brooklyn Colleges.

Students who failed one or more of the exams will have to appeal their cases, on the basis of their academic records, at one of the university's nine senior colleges. Such students face the loss of matriculated status, or in the case of transfers students from any of the eight community colleges, denial of admission.

However, because the standards are being applied for the first time, the university is recommending to the senior colleges that students who have passed two of the three tests be given an extension and be allowed to continue until they reach 78 credits to pass their third test.

Express General Satisfaction

University officials estimated that 200 students of the 350 who had not passed all three tests had passed two examinations. They added that some of these students may not have had a chance to take a retest in the subject they originally had failed as freshman.

University officials, in releasing the first comprehensive results on the testing program, expressed general satisfaction with the results, noting that the overwhelming majority of students finishing their second year were successfully meeting the new standards.

They acknowledged that the proportion of students ultimately passing the examinations could change because a large proportion of the 1978 entering class that was still enrolled had not yet reached the 61-credit mark. This, they said, was because many students attended the university either part time or were taking remedial courses that did not earn credit toward a degree.

Dr. Robert J. Kibbee, the university's chancellor, said he thought that while the testing program demonstrated that "a large percentage of our students come underprepared, it also suggests that they are not as unprepared as many people think they are."

"The university is not filled with people who read on the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade levels," he said, noting that while 49 percent of the 9,900 regular freshmen admitted to the senior colleges in 1978 could not pass all three tests, 81 percent of them passed the standardized reading test at the 12th-grade level. This ranked them well above the 50 percent national pass rate for high school seniors, the chancellor said. A regular freshman is one who achieved at least an 80 average in high school or who was in the top third of the class.

Office of Academic Affairs

The City University of New York
Freshman Skills Assessment Program

The CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test: Student Essays Evaluated and Annotated By The CUNY Task Force On Writing

Freshman Skills Assessment Program
Office of Academic Affairs
The City University of New York
535 East 80 Street
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CUNY Task Force on Writing, April 1979

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1980

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this pamphlet is to familiarize students, parents, and teachers with the CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test. We have included a sample CUNY test, the CUNY Evaluation Scale used by readers who grade the tests, and eight annotated student essays rated according to the CUNY scale. All of these sample essays received identical scores from two college readers, two University readers, as well as from members of the CUNY Task Force on Writing Assessment.

The CUNY evaluation system trains readers to rate essays on the basis of overall judgment, guided by familiarity with the CUNY Evaluation Scale. This scale aims at defining "minimal readiness" for a college-level composition course. By "college-level composition course," we mean the expository writing course traditionally taught in American Universities in the freshman year. To assess students' readiness for such a course, the evaluation scale rates students' essays from 1 to 6. A rating of 4 or better indicates that the essay meets the CUNY standard for "minimal readiness" in writing. To satisfy CUNY requirements two readers must rate the essay at least 4, for a total score of at least 8. If one reader rates the essay at 3 or below and the other rates it at 4 or above, a third reader resolves the difference. Although 6 is the highest score on the scale, essays rated 6 are not perfect essays. Our readers give a score of 6 to essays which indicate that the students who wrote them are ready to take advantage of what they will be taught in college-level composition. Similarly, a paper rated 1, although marked by serious problems, may nonetheless have some merit. All the essays in the booklet indicate a need for further instruction in writing.

This pamphlet includes one sample essay for each point on the CUNY Evaluation Scale, as well as additional essays to illustrate further the ratings 3 and 4. We have included these extra essays because scores of 3 and 4 lie at the turning point of the scale where "minimal readiness" is decided. A score of 4 satisfies CUNY requirements, but a score of 3 does not.

The commentaries on the essays were written for this booklet by members of the CUNY Task Force on Writing Assessment. Each commentary describes strengths and weaknesses in writing that led readers to the rating they gave, and suggests some of the elements that influence experienced readers in evaluating student writing. We believe that it is as important to identify strengths as to identify weaknesses, no matter how poor the essay. Students have to know their strengths in order to build on them. Teachers have to know students' strengths in order to help students learn. The commentaries may also provide further background for anyone who wants to understand better the CUNY standards for "minimal readiness" in writing.

In considering these sample essays and their ratings, teachers and students should remember that the CUNY Evaluation Scale is intended to determine the lowest level of writing ability which students should have in order to take advantage of what they will be taught in college-level composition. Readers of this pamphlet should also keep in mind that the sample essays were written in 50 minutes, under test conditions, with little time to plan or revise.

For more information about the Freshman Skills Assessment Program, please consult the CUNY Student Information Bulletin.

Evaluation Scale for the Writing Skills Assessment Test

6

The essay is competently organized and the ideas are expressed in appropriate language. A sense of pattern of development is present from beginning to end. The writer supports assertions with explanation or illustration.

Sentences reflect a command of syntax within the ordinary range of standard written English. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are generally correct.

5 - 4

The writer introduces some point or idea and demonstrates an awareness that development or illustration is called for.

The essay presents a discernible pattern of organization, even if there are occasional digressions.

The essay demonstrates sufficient command of vocabulary to convey, without serious distortion or excessive simplification, the range of the writer's ideas.

Sentences reflect a sufficient command of syntax to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. The writer generally avoids both the monotony of rudimentary syntax and the incoherence created by tangled syntax.

The writer demonstrates through punctuation an understanding of the boundaries of the sentence.

The writer spells the common words of the language with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Exceptions can be made for the so-called spelling "demons" which frequently trouble even an advanced writer.

The writer shows the ability to use regularly, but not necessarily faultlessly, the common forms of agreement and of grammatical inflection in standard written English.

3 - 2

An idea or point is suggested, but is undeveloped or presented in a purely repetitious way.

The pattern of the essay is somewhat random and relationships between sentences and paragraphs are rarely signaled.

The essay is restricted to a very narrow range of language, so that the vocabulary chosen frequently does not serve the needs of the writer.

The syntax of the essay is not sufficiently stable to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. The syntax often is rudimentary or tangled.

The writer frequently commits errors of punctuation which obscure sentence boundaries.

The writer spells the common words of the language with only intermittent accuracy.

The essay reveals recurrent grammatical problems; if there are only occasional problems, this may be due to the extremely narrow range of syntactical choices the writer has used.

1

The essay suffers from general incoherence and has no discernible pattern of organization. It displays a high frequency of error in the regular features of standard written English. Lapses in punctuation, spelling, and grammar often frustrate the reader. **Or**, the essay is so brief that any reasonably accurate judgment of the writer's competence is impossible.

SAMPLE TEST

Directions

You will have fifty minutes to plan and write the essay assigned below. You may wish to use your fifty minutes in the following way: 10 minutes planning what you are going to write; 30 minutes writing; 10 minutes rereading and correcting what you have written.

You should express your thoughts clearly and organize your ideas so that they will make sense to a reader. Correct grammar and sentence structure are important.

Write your essay on the lined pages of your booklet. You may use the inside of the front cover of the booklet for preliminary notes.

You must write your essay on **one** of the following assignments. Read each one carefully and then choose either A **or** B.

**A. *It always strikes me as a terrible shame to see young people spending so much of their time staring at television. If we could*

unplug all the TV sets in America, our children would grow up to be healthier, better educated, and more independent human beings.

Do you agree or disagree? Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

B. Older people bring to their work a lifetime of knowledge and experience. They should not be forced to retire, even if keeping them on the job cuts down on the opportunities for young people to find work.

Do you agree or disagree? Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

All essays in this pamphlet are responses to topic A.

Essay 6

(1) Television is a modern form of entertainment which has become so popular that almost every American family owns at least one T.V. (2) Many people enjoy watching movies and variety shows on television, in the comfort of their own homes. (3) If we didn't own televisions, we'd be going out more at night, spending money at theaters and seeing plays. (4) Although these are enjoyable forms of entertainment, it is usually more convenient and economical to stay at home. (5) Television also offers a variety of entertainment while a single theater does not.

(6) Since television has such a great popularity, educators are striving to offer shows which provide education and not just entertainment. (7) Young people, especially, are very attached to watching television, since they have grown up with it. (8) For this reason, it is important that the daily practice of television viewing be put to good uses.

(9) Unfortunately, television is often misused. (10) Young people are allowed to see and hear things which they don't understand, and this can be harmful. (11) This is why it is most important that parents supervise what their children watch. (12) The businessmen behind television, as with every form of entertainment, offer what the public wants to see. (13) This is how they make their money. (14) Therefore, parents and educators should encourage their children to watch shows which provide some educational as well as entertaining value.

(15) Children often choose to watch cartoons which provide little or no educational value. (16) Instead, these shows are usually based on some sort of violence. (17) Since children are easily swayed, these shows can prove to be harmful on a child's outlook on life and on his relationship with others. (18) Children should be encouraged instead to watch shows like Sesame Street, which offers educational entertainment. (19) This is an excellent program: viewers can learn how to build relationships, how different nationalities can live together in harmony, how to count and read on an elementary level. (20) All these things are taught by colorful puppets and happy people and funny cartoons. (21) From my personal experience in watching several children viewing Sesame Street, the show is one of the best children's shows available.

(22) Children use their creativity which evolves from what they see and hear around them. (23) Parents should put good television programs to use by helping children to relate to the programs. (24) Of course, other sources of entertainment and education, such as books and outdoor trips are also important.

(25) Like anything else in life, too much television may be harmful. (26) But treated in the right respect and with proper guidance, television can be the great invention that it was meant to be.

Comment on Essay 6

This essay is a 6 because it has a clear and sustained pattern of organization. The writer's use of connecting words and phrases holds the argument together. For example, she makes a general statement (sentence 18), a supporting point (sentences 19 and 20), and then a personal observation (sentence 21), drawing clear relationships among these levels of generality. She also understands and mentions an argument other people might raise to challenge her point (sentences 24-26).*

The writer's sentences are varied in length and structure. She subordinates ideas in different ways (sentences 3-6) and varies sentence length, using short sentences to good effect (sentence 13). In sentence 5, she accurately balances two parallel ideas through sentence structure. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are excellent.

The essay does, however, have limitations. There are occasional cliches (sentences 19 and 26), the style is sometimes stilted or repetitious (sentences 8, 14, and 23), and some sentences are unnecessarily wordy (sentence 11). In addition, the logic of some sentences is unclear (sentence 12).

Essay 5

(1) I disagree with this passage. (2) The writer of the passage believes that the children of America are in many ways harmed by watching television and would be better off without it. (3) I agree that excessive television watching is not good for anyone. (4) Children who watch too much TV tend to become lazy and show a lack of imagination, and therefore they are harmed by it. (5) Television can also benefit children in many ways. (6) They seem to learn things much quicker and at a younger age by watching educational TV shows such as "Sesame Street" and "Electric Company," than children who don't watch these shows. (7) Shows like "Sesame Street" teach them things through repetition and they catch a child's attention easily through their use of bright colors, cartoons, music and puppets. (8) Children enjoy these shows and also learn from them.

(9) I believe that children should be guided by their parents as to what shows they can and cannot watch. (10) Children should watch shows that are suitable for them, that is, simple enough for them to understand but not so simple that they are bored by it. (11) They should not be allowed to watch shows that are excessively violent because these shows leave a bad impression on them. (12) I don't think that this pertains just to children, though, because adults are affected by these shows too.

(13) From my own observation, I have concluded that children between the ages of three and ten watch the most television. (14) These are very important years because the child's whole character is formed during these years. (15) If the child watches too much TV it can be harmful to him, especially if he is watching "junk" TV shows, that is shows with no educational value whatsoever. (16) Later on, it seems that young adults seem to drift away from TV and don't start

*In commenting on essays 2, 3A, 4A, and 6 we have referred to the writers as "she." In commenting on essays 1, 3B, 4B, and 5 we have referred to the writers as "he."

watching it to an excess again until they hit about thirty. (17) By this time, many of them have children of their own and are sitting down to enjoy it with them.

(18) In conclusion, I think that television watching has both advantages and disadvantages. (19) Children can really benefit from watching TV and I think the children of the generations will be smarter than we could haver ever dreamed possible.

Comment on Essay 5

This essay is a 5 because the writer states a position and supports it with general statements (sentences 6 and 12). He then lets at least one of these general statements (sentence 6) organize supporting concrete detail. (sentences 6-8). Furthermore, in supporting his position the writer recognizes that the issue is complex, and he addresses himself, at least in passing, to some of these complexities (sentences 10 and 16-17).

Most of the writer's sentences are clear and are neither too colloquial nor stuffy. Some sentences demonstrate some skill in balancing ideas and in graceful phrasing (sentences 2, 4, and 10).

But the essay is a 5 and not a 6 mainly because the writer has not collected all his material regarding the effect of TV on children's learning (sentences 6-8, 15, 19) into a single logical paragraph. And although the writer raises interesting issues about watching TV when he discusses the relationship between parents and children, he has not drawn these scattered thoughts together (sentences 9-12, 16-17). As a result, paragraphs two and three drift from their announced topic. Also, sentence 19 is not clearly expressed.

Essay 4A

(1) Television has a harmful effect on young people. (2) If a child is watching television he cannot explore the outside world for himself. (3) The violence on these shows could make him believe there is no good only bad and television takes away the child's ability to imagine, think or play.

(4) If a child is in the habit of watching television he cannot use his sense of curiosity to learn about things around him. (5) The television does this for him, he does not initiate this feeling on his own. (6) It might be good for a child to see a flower, for example, on t.v. but nothing can show how it really is, to take it in your own hands and describe it for yourself. (7) This is what t.v. is taking away from today's children. (8) Their sense to learn and to explore on their own. (9) These young people are depending on t.v. for something which they have already, but just do not use.

(10) Most of what is shown on television today is violence. (11) Since young people are watching so much t.v. violence could be the only thing that appeals to them and they carry this distruction to their own every day lives. (12) Children watching violence to much could get used to it, not care about real murders or wouldn't think a second time about picking a gun and killing somebody because his hero "Kojak" constantly does it on t.v. and he wants to be just like him. (13) Young children might not know the difference between the good guy or bad ones and sometimes on t.v. the bad guys are the heros the roles have changed considerably.

(14) Television takes away the child's ability to imagine, play and think for himself. (15) If a child is constantly watch t.v. he doesn't have time to imagine or play or think for himself. (16) Playing is good for a young child because he learns how to share and understand others by the use of toys. (17) By thinking a child can determine his values not use his favorite t.v. characters' values which might be invalid ones. (18) Imagining is taken away from the child because of t.v. advancement children can now go off to those far of lands that they used to imagine.

(19) Television has a distructive effect on a child. (20) He becomes addicted to it and does not go, outside to explore. (21) The child can take on invalid values seen on t.v. like violence. (22) T.V. can take away the ability for the child to use his own mind in everyday life.

Comment on Essay 4A

This essay is a 4 and not a 3 because it has a clear pattern of organization. The writer follows a simple five-paragraph form. She states her position and gives three reasons to support it in the first paragraph. She develops each reason in the next three paragraphs. And she concludes by restating the introduction. Each paragraph holds together pretty well. Specific illustrations help develop the argument in the middle paragraphs. The meaning of most sentences is clear, and the sentences are varied enough in length and structure to keep the reader interested. The writer's vocabulary seems adequate to her needs.

Despite these strengths, however, this essay is not a 5 because the writer does not connect ideas from paragraph to paragraph. This lack of transition weakens the overall logic of the essay. In addition, sentence beginnings and endings are sometimes not clear (sentences 5, 6, 8, 18). The writer tries to put two or three ideas into the same sentence without sufficient skill in handling sentence structure to allow her to do something meaningfully (sentences 13, 14, 18). Occasionally the writer uses language imprecisely (sentence 21) and is repetitious (sentences 15 and 16). She also misspells some common words.

ESSAY 4B

(1) I agree strongly with the passage, simply because it is very true. (2) It is said that Americans spend about five hours a day watching television. (3) Young people can be influenced easily by television. (4) They tend to believe what they see. (5) One example of this would be an incident that happened in Florida. (6) A young boy was watching a popular police show and saw one person kill another, the boy, probably feeling it would be alright, murdered a friend of his.

(7) The passage also states that it is not healthy watching too much T.V. (8) I agree with this also. (9) People tend to just sit back and watch others, in sporting events for example. (10) From this people can become very lazy, which I feel is not at all healthy.

(11) The passage says that "IF we could unplug all the T.V. sets in America, we would be better off. (12) I cannot believe this because without the use of television we are losing many things, such as educational shows for children. (13) They help give the child a better understanding of the way the world in which he lives in operates. (14) We see a variety of Nature programs which help us understand how other thing live in the world.

(15) I do agree that television can corrupt the minds of young people. (16) They can learn many improper things that they do not need in life.

(17) I remember when I was younger that I would think that if it was on television and often people do things like murders, robberies, hijacking and other thing of that nature, I would feel thing like that happen all the time and that it was proper.

(18) I also agree strongly with idea of having a family hour. (19) In this time children and young people can watch worthwhile programs. (20) When it gets later into the evening, programs come on which are made for the older and mature person.

(21) In conclusion I would like to say that television has many good and bad points. (22) Television has been around for a long time and it will be around for many more years to come. (23) Maybe in the future there will be "perfect television, where there will be programs to suit the needs of everyone in America.

Comment on Essay 4B

This essay's major strength, and what makes it a 4 rather than a 3, is that its organization is simple and clear, and its sentence construction is relatively skillful. The writer develops a pattern, maintaining it through simple connecting sentences at the beginning of each paragraph. Each paragraph takes up a separate aspect of the statement in question and offers concrete detail to support that aspect. The writer also uses varied sentence patterns and a vocabulary well chosen for the topic he is writing about.

The essay is not a 5, however, because as a whole its argument is inconsistent. Overall its ideas are randomly organized. The writer starts out "strongly" agreeing, but then, beginning in sentence 11, he disagrees with the passage given in the test question. In sentence 18, he refers to an issue that the question does not raise, and he concludes the essay with a statement that carefully avoids taking sides at all.

Also, although there is no pattern of major error, the writer sometimes does not show sentence endings (sentence 6). He misuses punctuation (sentence 17) as well as singular and plural forms (sentences 14 and 17).

ESSAY 3A

(1) I disagree with the statement that television has a harmful effect on young people. (2) If we unplug all the TV set, it may result in an opposite way rather than it said in the passage. (3) This result maybe that children become ignorant and blind to the modern society. (4) Another words, they will not know what is going on in this world by means of news cast on television.

(5) However, it's undeniable to say television also has a harmful effect to the children because of some series shown on TV that deal with actions and violences. (6) But besides those series, there are programs that are shown to provide the young people the necessary knowledge and education. (7) These programs are often seen on channel thirteen which is considered an educational broadcasting company. (8) Many programs shown on which are excellent and interesting, and providing real and scientific knowledges to the viewers, such as NOVA, VISA and many others. (9) I have been watching these programs many times, although not becoming omniscient, I now understand more, so do the other people, the gradual advancement and improvement of this world.

(10) It is not necessary to have this kind of programs only on this public TV company. (11) Good programs can also be seen on those commercial TV broadcasting companies too. (12) There are certain hours that those channels will present some special series that are good to be watched. (13) For example, There are programs like "The Last of the Wild", "In Search of . . .", etc. shown on these channels.

(14) Again, it is not necessary to watch just these excellent series. (15) There are news broadcasting on most of the channels too, and which gives the viewers the events of the world. (16) A television is good for those who are illiterary but able to listen and for those who are lazy enough to pick up a copy of a newspaper.

(17) It is true that children in recent years have imitated the characters on the TV shows and done the things these characters did. (18) Sometimes crimes are resulted. (19) It is also true that children become lazier on their homework but spend their times on TV. (20) Besides these weakness that the TV provides, remember, there are good programs described above. (21) There is only one way to stop the belief of a harmful effect of television, which is to find a way to halt those violent shows on TV and concentrate on those more educational programs.

Comment on Essay 3A

This essay is a 3 and not a 2 because the writer makes her point, sticks to it, and offers some specific details to support her views. She is able to introduce a number of different aspects of her subject and keep them in a reasonably clear relation to one another. The writer establishes useful paragraph divisions (with the exception of the misplaced sentence 5) and, in her final paragraph, she points out opposing points of view (sentences 17-19).

This essay is not a 4, because the details the writer introduces are unexpanded and therefore unexplained (sentences 8, 13, and 15). As a result, although the writer has many potentially interesting ideas, they are not well developed.

In addition, the writer's control of language and sentence structure is inconsistent. Her sentences are often tangles because of incorrect verb forms or lack of punctuation (sentences 8, 9, and 18). She confuses singular and plural forms (sentences 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 20), and misuses or omits articles (sentences 3, 6, 16). Although the writer has a generally adequate vocabulary, she frequently puts words together incoherently and in that way confuses the reader. For example, "it may result in an opposite way" (sentence 2), and "there are news broadcasting" (sentence 15).

ESSAY 3B

(1) I agree that television does have an harmful effect on young people. (2) The young people will watch television then to do homework or prepare themselves for a test. (3) They will make up excuses for not doing the homework or prepare themselves for the test, the excuse might be one of the following: it doesn't matter if I fail the test I will still pass the class, it's only one homework assignment I will be missing, or the teacher shouldn't fail me because I missed one or failed one test. (4) This is how the young people feel, they would watch television before they would read a book. (5) I know they feel that way because all my friends are like that and I use to be like that. (6) I use to watch television then to read a book or do homework until I realized how important an education was. (7) Watching television wouldn't make me do better in school it makes me do worse watching television wouldn't get me a job.

(8) Television changes some peoples life styles they try to be like the person on the television. (9) After the program is over they might say I want to be like him or her. (10) They don't realize that is a person playing the role of a character. (11) If the character does something the young person might think that it is done like that in real life. (12) The young person could get hurt doing something that they might seen on television. (13) Then they wouldn't understand

why it don't happen the same way for them. (14) Until someone explains to them that certain this on television only happens on television.

Comment on Essay 3B

This essay is a 3 and not a 2 primarily because the writer uses language with relative ease. He begins by stating his position clearly, and he offers two separate arguments to support that position. Some of the sentences are relatively clear (sentence 1, 2). Spelling throughout the essay is reasonably accurate.

The essay is not a 4, in part, however, because within each paragraph the writer's efforts to develop ideas tend to lead him off the track (sentence 3) or to offer other argument which he does not express clearly or develop well (sentences 7 and 11-14).

The writer also has only limited skill with sentence structure and punctuation (sentences 3, 4, 5, 7, 8), and only a fair command of subject-verb agreement (sentence 13) and verb forms (sentence 12). Finally, his vocabulary does not entirely suit his needs. This limitation, together with poorly constructed sentences, frequently causes the writer to repeat words and to make inexact statements (sentences 4-12).

ESSAY 2

(1) Recently I have watched some of television's top rate shows. (2) The shows have no educational value at all. (3) The violence and sex that the networks put out is outrageous. (4) Not only that, but it has an overall bad effect on grades in school. (5) The time these shows are air, interfers with time for study, term projects book reports, and homework.

(6) I do however; disagree that everyone should pull the plug on television. (7) Television does have its' positive side. (8) With the PBS (CHANNEL 13) education shows (NOVA, etc.). (9) Television is an excellent means of communacation. (10) Television news has more information plus films so you have a feeling of what's happening and so you would be a bore.

(11) A solution is to allow maybe one hours of air time* for network show an evening on weekdays and unlimited air time for weekends and holidays.

(12) The television could if used properly new tool of education if it is used wisely and by programming more educational series.

(13) Television is also a great advance. (14) It's a good feeling to come home and watch a show to relax you after a long days work.

*One hour of prime time.

Comment on Essay 2

This essay is a 2 and not a 1 because the writer shows some ability to organize her ideas in paragraphs one through four. She uses connecting words at the beginning of paragraphs to suggest that her argument is logical (sentences 6 and 11). In addition, the essay has some good sentences, at least in the first half, and the writer has tried to use a vocabulary appropriate to her topic.

The essay is not a 3, however, in part because it does not begin with a clear statement of the writer's position. Its development of ideas is weak because the logic of paragraphs one and two does not lead to the conclusion drawn in paragraph three. The third and fourth paragraphs are each only one sentence long, leaving their basic ideas undeveloped. The fourth paragraph is a better summary of the writer's position thatn the last paragraph, which goes off the subject and offers more arguments in favor of watching television.

The sentence structure, relatively strong until sentence 10, then becomes increasingly confused (sentences 11 and 12). In addition, the essay contains errors of punctuation which obscure sentence beginnings and endings (sentences 6, 8, 12), misspellings of common words (throughout), errors in subject-verb agreement (sentence 3), and incorrect pronoun reference (sentence 4).

ESSAY 1

(1) I agree, "is harmful effect on young people." (2) Most children is more effect than adult because young children watch on T.V. like one Sample violent is bad for children eyes, someday - they mind think is fun; I know one neighbor she had a son and once he watch T.V. on the program he saw Batman and Robin climbing the building so he try it, he climb the rope and the rope broke loose and fell on the floor bleeding top on his head - they rush him to the hospital he had about 10 or 15 stitches. (3) He never doing again he know only just fantasy on T.V.

(4) T.V. cause more trouble like putting some sample on children mind; They should take out more violent, too many police series on t.v. and they should put good thing on Television program for the children, the world is too many violent already. (5) like cop and Robber - someday they children grow up - they do same thing on T.V. (6) I wish parent do something about this; parent should watch they children to be sure children don't allow watch violent or other thing on T.V. parent should spend more time with the children such as: give something keep away from T.V. (7) I read in the magazine they said, "Rate to high on violent on T.V. should put down less violent on T.V. many people is complain all the time; I believe they should put no violent and other things on T.V. for young people, T.V. is harmful on people mind, And children.

Comment on Essay 1

This essay is not a 2 for several important reasons. First, the writer does not clearly indicate sentence beginnings and endings, so it is often hard to make sense of what he says. Second, although the essay keeps to its topic, it is confused. For example, the writer says "violent is bad for children eyes" (sentence 2), yet follows this with an example that doesn't support that statement. In the second paragraph he suggests, "they should put good thing on Television program for children" (sentence 4), but does not follow this with examples of what he has in mind. And he attempts to suggest what parents can do to help, but does not give details.

Third, the writer's word choice and sentence structure are weak. Words missing from sentences hide his meaning, and his vocabulary is too limited to say what he seems to want to say. Moreover, the essay suffers from many errors in standard written English: tense (sentence 2), subject-verb agreement (sentences 2-4), and pluralizing (sentence 4). The writer uses capital and lower case letters inconsistently (sentences 2 and 5). He uses punctuation poorly: scattered use of the dash, semi-colon, and colon (sentences 2, 5, and 6), omission of the apostrophe (sentences 2, 4, and 7) omission of quotation marks (sentence 7).

Despite its many problems, reflected in the rating of 1, this essay has some strengths. It is unified, since it deals exclusively with the point that there is too much violence on television. The writer tries to give examples to support his agreement with the test statement. The essay has a rudimentary paragraph division, a sense of an ending, and relatively accurate spelling.